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April 24, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

PROPOSAL FOR USE OF AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT, HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM FUNDING

On March 24, 2009, Supervisor Knabe directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to return to the Board in 30 days with a plan on how to best leverage funds made available to Los Angeles County for homeless prevention programs via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The motion requested particular emphasis on programs that complement the County's homeless prevention strategies and focus on especially vulnerable populations, including foster children, Transition Age Youth (TAY), as well as CalWORKs and General Relief (GR) recipients.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Requirements

The HPRP funds are to be used for prevention and rapid re-housing activities, such as financial assistance and services that assist people with housing stability and placement. Additionally, the funding can be used for data collection and evaluation. Financial assistance includes security and utility deposits, moving cost assistance, and short-term or medium-term rental assistance. Stabilization services can include case management, service coordination, housing search and placement, legal services to help people stay in housing, and credit repair, such as money management. Eligible participants are limited to 18 months of assistance, after which they are expected to be

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self-sustaining in housing. Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to the following: mortgage assistance, construction or rehabilitation, payment of credit card bills or other consumer debt, travel costs, work or education related materials, and cash assistance.

Guiding Principles

In response to Supervisor Knabe's Board motion, the CEO has prepared a proposal in collaboration with the Departments of Child Support Services (CSSD), Children and Family Services (DCFS), Community and Senior Services (DCSS), Consumer Affairs (DCA), Public Social Services (DPSS), the Community Development Commission (CDC), and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). The County plans to utilize the HPRP funding based on the following principles that align with the HPRP funding requirements:

- Recognize HPRP funding as "one time;"
- Build upon current Homeless Prevention Initiative (HPI) programs;
- Develop a "no wrong door" policy;
- Target clients who show sustainability potential;
- Focus on homelessness prevention measures; and
- Help families and individuals whose income is at or below 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) (\$39,650 for a family of four, \$27,750 for individuals).

Additionally, in a recent survey, providers of the HPI noted opportunities for enhanced service coordination and sharing of resources. They expressed significant interest in improving access to child care, employment support, and law enforcement. Efforts to link families with existing child care facilities would increase family income by allowing more parents to work full-time.

While the HPRP proposal would primarily target those individuals and families who are not eligible for public assistance, other funds from the Recovery Act would focus on strengthening GR, CalWORKs, and programs for TAY and foster youth. For example, DPSS is proposing to strengthen the GR program in order to: increase the number of participants who receive early SSI approvals; create more opportunities to prepare 'unemployable' participants for employment; and promote stability for more participants with housing subsidies and case management. In addition, federal stimulus funds from the Recovery Act, such as the TANF Contingency and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Funds would be used towards connecting individuals, including TAY and foster youth to job training and subsidized employment opportunities.

Overview of HPRP Proposal

Through the HPRP, the County proposes to prevent homelessness by closing the assistance gap for low-income residents who are at or below 50 percent of AMI. Specifically, the County would provide homelessness prevention assistance to residents who are at-risk of homelessness and who can demonstrate a sustained living situation upon program completion. The County plan will utilize all resources available through the Recovery Act in order to provide a comprehensive menu of services to assist eligible program participants.

Building on the HPRP mandates, the success of existing homeless prevention programs, strengthening the network of service providers, and applying lessons learned from the HPI, the County proposes to invest \$12 million to further prevent and reduce homelessness utilizing the following four strategies:

1. **Expansion of Housing Assistance Programs:** Low-income families who are not eligible for CalWORKs, and adults, including seniors and veterans, would be offered emergency assistance to prevent eviction, moving assistance, housing relocation, and rental subsidies. For instance, a senior who receives supportive services from DCSS may become unable to pay rent or utilities and face eviction. As a result of this program, the senior would be connected with DCSS to receive assistance to prevent homelessness. DCSS would then process the applications and work with DPSS to have the payments issued. Moreover, beginning in October 2010, funding would allow for continuation of eviction prevention and moving assistance programs for CalWORKs/Non-Welfare-To-Work families.
2. **Development of Rapid Re-Housing Programs:** Rapidly re-housing residents would provide stability and the opportunity to focus on employment and/or needed health and social services. This program would allow a parent who temporarily loses eligibility for CalWORKs to remain in the home, take steps to prepare for and find a job, and build a stable home environment for the children.
3. **Development of a Seamless Support System:** Individuals and families would retain housing and achieve greater self-sufficiency through case management and linkages to such supportive services as: household budgeting, landlord-tenant counseling, and assistance with lease agreements. The DCA would provide outreach and education to prevent homelessness by increasing participants' awareness of tenant rights, knowledge about money management, and planning for long-term stability.

4. **Enhanced Coordination of Services:** The Los Angeles County Housing Resource Center (LACHRC) website (<http://housing.lacounty.gov/>) would act as an on-line pre-screening tool that would assess an applicant's eligibility and provide referrals to appropriate HPRP programs for intake. This screening tool would assist Information and Referral from 211 L.A. County, the DCA, and other agencies. For example, a single parent with young children could be connected to several programs that offer housing locator services, moving assistance, and education on household budgeting.

The County is responsible for providing HPRP assistance to residents of unincorporated areas and 47 cities with a population of less than 50,000. In order to create a seamless Countywide system, strengthening the network among providers in all 88 cities would further prevent and reduce homelessness. By creating an extensive support system with shared resources, more can be achieved for residents.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) outreached to communities throughout the County. As 16 cities will receive their own funding, including the City of Los Angeles, our Office invited City Managers to attend a meeting with your Homeless Deputies and our County departments and partners to share the suggestions mentioned above and to hear from them about their interest in partnering with us. Five cities were represented and several agreed they would like to work together in varying degrees. Representatives from our Office, DPSS, and LAHSA plan to outreach to cities that were not in attendance.

NEXT STEPS

On April 28, 2009, the CDC will be requesting your Board to approve the application to accept \$12,197,108 in federal HPRP funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Currently, the CEO is convening weekly meetings with County departments, CDC, and LAHSA. The departments and partner agencies are preparing estimated costs and staffing necessary to administer these programs. At this time, the CDC is contacting HUD to learn more about requirements for property inspections and also has approached 211 L.A. County to assist with the LACHRC online pre-screening tool and referral system.

The CEO and the CDC will be reporting back to your Board by June 30, 2009 with the listing of the final projects to be funded.

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By implementing the strategies included in this proposal, the County would build on and enhance existing infrastructure to prevent more individuals and families from becoming homeless. If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Miguel Santana, Deputy Chief Executive Officer at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at msantana@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:MS:KH
VKD:hn

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
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